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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine what personal characteristics are prerequisites to successful agribusiness employment in Montana. A questionnaire about vocational students' personal characteristics and home and school background was developed, pretested, and mailed to 306 agribusinesses in the state. Seventy-seven responses (26 percent) were received and analyzed on an Apple II+ computer. The study concluded that the personal characteristics most desired by Montana agribusinesses are (1) honesty, (2) willingness to fulfill obligations and promises, (3) ability to listen, speak, and write effectively, (4) ability to follow orders, (5) being on time and using time effectively, and (6) friendliness and cleanliness. The study also found that prospective employees with a farm or ranch background are preferred in Montana and that the chance of obtaining employment in Montana agribusiness is greatly increased by two years of postsecondary education. About 25 percent of the agribusinesses preferred high school graduates with vocational courses, and most businesses gave preference to persons who had been involved in school activities such as Future Farmers of America and athletics. The study recommended that since Montana agribusinesses are often not aware of the vocational agriculture program, teachers should increase their public relations activity. The study also recommended that efforts should be made to increase the number of students being employed on farms as part of their occupational experience, that students should be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities, and that schools should strive to improve their programs to prepare students for employment. The survey instrument and sample responses are appended. (KC)

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PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS WHICH MAKE PEOPLE MORE EMPLOYABLE IN AGRIBUSINESS

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PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS WHICH MAKE PEOPLE MORE EMPLOYABLE IN AGRICULTURE

Research shows the lack of appropriate personal characteristics rather than a worker's inability to perform technical skills most often causes individuals to fail on their first job. Vocational educators have been extremely cognizant of the technical competence required for entry level job success but, in some cases, have been guilty of giving less attention to interpersonal relations. These interpersonal relations are more difficult to identify than technical skills and frequently more difficult to build into a training curriculum.

Often, first time job holders act like students. They continue to want adults to keep them on track and remind them of their responsibilities on the job. Many have not learned to work without constant supervision nor can they function without constant feedback. Many beginning agribusiness workers have not learned to judge their own progress.

Other beginning workers mismanage their time. They tend to use the clock to measure their progress rather than how effectively and efficiently the task has been completed. These workers often work for the days off rather than the success of the business.

Inflexibility keeps others from advancing on the job. A worker with this characteristic may not want to learn new skills or follow established methodology. A successful business expects their workers to follow an established procedure.

An immature worker who wishes to retain his/her scruffy dress and lazy attitude towards personal appearance on the job will often find themselves in unpleasant situations. Often these same individuals want to socialize on the job.

Beginning workers must realize that every work situation has some unpleasant aspects. Some tasks may seem boring and even distasteful for the beginning worker. A young worker should not be impatient and expect to become a manager overnight. Successful workers understand that routine work is a part of the overall job.

During their training period potential workers sometimes avoid people who didn't fit into their group. Thus, they do not learn to get along with all types of people. The workplace cannot become a combat zone. Personality conflicts can be one of the biggest causes of failure on the job.

Vocational educators in agriculture cannot be content in training exclusively for technical skills. Prospective workers must also be made aware of the personal characteristics that will help insure job success.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to determine those personal characteristics that are prerequisites to successful agribusiness employment.

Need for the Study

Perspective workers are at times denied employment based on their lack of selected personal characteristics rather than their lack of technical competence. Others are fired from their job

because of personal characteristics. What personal characteristics help a person gain and maintain employment? Vocational education must include not only technical curriculum areas, but should also prepare the student for the realities of obtaining and retaining employment.

During the early 1970's the Agricultural Education Department completed a series of studies to determine those competencies needed for employment in agriculture and agribusiness. Generally, these competencies dealt with the technical tasks which employees needed to perform. A limited number of broad personal qualities and attitudes were identified as being needed for employment. However, the researchers made no attempt to determine the detailed personal characteristics that an individual would perform to accomplish the broad technical competencies identified in the earlier studies. Consequently, there was very little known about the specific nature of these few broad personal characteristics. Also, little was known about the specific tasks individuals must be able to perform in order to successfully accomplish the competencies. More emphasis should be given to developing affective type competencies when training potential agribusiness employees.

Harlen (4) reported that employers have grown skeptical of paper and pencil tests to determine whether or not to offer employment to an individual. Instead, employers have developed specific selection processes and interviewing techniques. Consequently, perspective employees may find themselves lacking skills needed to compete favorably in the selection process.

This idea is supported by Harlen (4) who concluded that, "The skills which play a critical role in surviving the selection process are largely unlike the skills needed to do the job nor are they skills which most students have had any significant preparation."

A logical question that may arise is, "Is it possible for education to affect personal characteristics that make a person a good employee?" Hensley (5) sought answers to this question by conducting an experimental research project in Kentucky. As a result of this research he concluded that when a concentrated effort toward improving worker employability is undertaken, vocational students can make gains in job seeking and job securing areas. He also concluded that training could change work related values.

Objectives

The major objectives of this study were to:

1. Determine those personal and personality characteristics that agribusiness employers deem necessary for successful employment in their business.
2. Determine other competencies which make vocational students employable.
3. Update and validate personal competence that were identified in the previous Montana Manpower Study of Agribusiness.
4. Gather data to inform vocational agriculture teachers of the importance of helping students develop personal characteristics which influence student's employability.

Population

The population of this project was identified from the yellow pages of Montana telephone directories. Specific categories dealing with agribusinesses were identified and the businesses in these catagories were included in the population. A total of 1589 Montana Agribusinesses formed the population. From this population a sample of 306 Agribusinesses were randomly selected.

Instrument

During the computer search of previous research and literature, a number of studies were identified which listed personal characteristics as part of their project. As a result, a total of 106 different personal characteristics were identified. Following peer review, 47 personal characteristics were selected to be included in the final questionnaire. (Appendix A).

The review of literature also revealed that educational background, residential background, high school curriculum taken by students and their involvement in high school activities were important factors which influenced the development of personal characteristics. Consequently, five questions were developed dealing with these factors. Also developed were three questions to assess the ability of vocational agriculture in helping students develop desirable personal characteristics and training students for entry level employment.

The final questionnaire was pretested by mailing it, and a letter of explanation to five agribusinesses in the state. The

results of the pretest revealed that the questionnaire had content validity and was suitable for use in the study.

The validated questionnaire, which had the return address and stamp as a part of the instrument, and letters of explanation was mailed to the 306 agribusinesses. Eight of the instruments were not delivered because no forwarding address was given for the business. No attempt was made to replace these businesses. Consequently, 298 businesses received the initial mailing. Three weeks after the first mailing a second questionnaire and letter was mailed to 50 randomly selected businesses from the nonrespondents. This process resulted in 80 questionnaires being returned. Three of the questionnaires were received after the responses had been entered on the computer and the results calculated. As a result, a return rate of 25.8% was received. This return rate gives a confidence interval of $\pm$ 10.7 percent when using a 95% confidence level.

Analysis of the Data

The responses of the 77 businesses who returned the questionnaire were coded and entered into an Apple II+ computer via a word processing program. The data were then analyzed using the MSU Stat Package. The results of this data analysis is presented in the following narrative and tables.

TABLE 1. TYPES OF AGRIBUSINESSES RESPONDING TO THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT (N=77)

Businesses	Frequency	%
Ag Supplies/Services	32	41.5
Ag Mechanics	10	13.0
Ag Products	9	11.7
Ornamental Horticulture	4	5.3
Ag Resources	12	15.5
Ag Production	10	13.0

The data in Table I reveals that each of the six types of agribusinesses are represented in the study. Agricultural sales and service is the largest type represented with 41.5 percent. Thirteen percent of the respondents were agriculture products and agriculture production. Ornamental horticulture is the smallest type with 5.3 percent.

The data in Table 2 is arranged in order based on the computed mean. The respondents were asked to rate each personal characteristic using the following scale; 1 = not applicable, 2 = nice to have, 3 = desired, 4 = strongly desired, and 5 = essential. As revealed by the data, the most essential personal characteristic is "honest in word and deed". Other characteristics which have a mean greater than 4 are: "reports for work regularly and on time, understands spoken and written orders, can listen and follow instructions correctly, can read and follow written instructions correctly, and fulfills promises and obligations".

TABLE 2

Rank Order & Frequency of Personal Characteristics as Reported by Agribusinesses (N=77)

Characteristics	Frequency NA	NH	D	SD	E	MEAN	SD
Is honest in word and deed.	1	1	3	16	56	4.62	.74
Reports for work regularly and on time.	2	0	2	21	52	4.57	.79
Understands spoken and written orders.	1	0	4	31	39	4.31	1.00
Can listen and follow instructions correctly.	0	18	3	40	30	4.31	.85
Can read and follow written instructions correctly.	1	11	14	31	27	4.12	1.02
Fulfills promises and obligations.	2	18	11	24	36	4.07	1.24
Greets people in a friendly manner.	0	1	16	36	21	3.88	1.08
Makes wise use of time.	1	2	14	46	12	3.87	.94
Displays an industrious attitude on the job.	1	0	25	30	19	3.87	1.01
Speaks clearly and effectively.	1	1	16	41	16	3.83	.99
Is a cheerful, pleasant individual.	1	0	23	31	20	3.82	1.04
Has the ability to work in harmony with coworkers.	0	4	16	32	22	3.82	1.14
Exhibits personal cleanliness.	0	3	25	28	20	3.81	.96
Is happy in his/her work.	1	2	25	24	22	3.81	1.16
Works alone or with minimum supervision.	0	6	7	46	15	3.79	1.09
Stays with a task until completed.	0	4	15	36	19	3.79	1.17
Displays an appropriate attitude toward company.	1	1	22	28	22	3.78	1.15
Solves arithomatic and numerical problems correctly.	2	5	22	24	22	3.69	1.18
Exhibits emotional stability.	2	7	12	33	20	3.69	1.25
Initiates undertakings, takes charge when need be.	1	1	20	40	12	3.68	1.06
Observes regular ethical and moral codes.	2	5	8	30	19	3.65	1.22
Admits error when shown to be wrong.	1	2	16	30	15	3.61	1.15
Retains and recalls ideas.	0	6	22	38	8	3.60	1.04
Completes work in an orderly manner.	1	3	13	41	10	3.57	1.14
Wears clothing appropriate for the job.	0	3	25	31	14	3.57	1.15
Deals with people in a tense situation.	3	6	17	34	14	3.53	1.22
Adjusts to interruptions and change.	0	3	28	37	14	3.53	1.11
Exhibits self confidence.	0	5	23	37	8	3.50	1.03
Selects a course of action for solving a problem while on the job.	1	4	25	37	7	3.47	1.05
Exhibits personal neatness.	0	4	32	24	13	3.44	1.15
Attends to details amid distractions.	1	4	30	30	9	3.43	1.07
Writes clearly and effectively.	1	8	30	24	12	3.42	1.08
Respects the opinion of others even though he/she disagrees.	0	9	28	31	7	3.39	.99
Admits to a lack of knowledge.	1	13	22	24	14	3.36	1.22
Can work safely among potentially hazardous situations.	7	8	16	19	21	3.35	1.48
Observes and differentiates details while on the job.	3	3	34	25	9	3.33	1.12
Ability to adapt to a variety of personalities and behaviors.	0	12	26	30	6	3.27	1.07
Exhibits resourcefulness.	0	9	31	30	4	3.26	1.01
Concerned with personal and on-the-job development.	3	6	28	28	8	3.26	1.20
Shows intellectual curiosity.	1	14	25	28	5	3.22	1.18
Can work in hot, cold, noisy work places.	5	15	19	20	15	3.21	1.35
Arouses enthusiasm in fellow workers.	3	14	25	24	8	3.14	1.19
Adjusts to repetitive activities.	3	15	25	26	5	3.08	1.14
Performs a complex set of activities.	7	16	25	22	4	2.88	1.19
Desires to be a leader while on the job.	8	14	33	16	3	2.78	1.13
Has good posture.	9	27	27	9	2	2.47	1.06

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Of the 46 personal characteristics only three had a mean less than three, which indicates that those characteristics are not necessarily desired. These characteristics are: "perform a complex set of activities, desire to be a leader while on the job, and has good posture."

The respondents were also asked to rank the ten most important characteristics that they would look for in an employee. If a statement was ranked first in importance it was assigned a value of one. If the statement was ranked tenth, it was assigned a value of ten. A mean was then computed and the ten most important personal characteristics were identified and are reported in Table 3.

TABLE 3. RANK ORDER BY FREQUENCY OF THE TEN MOST IMPORTANT PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS FOR EMPLOYMENT AS REPORTED BY MONTANA AGRIBUSINESSES.

Characteristic	Rank	Frequency	Mean
Is honest in word and deed	1	45	2.9
Reports for work regularly and on time	2	38	4.23
Can listen and follow instructions correctly	3	21	4.52
Fulfills promises and obligations	4	20	3.95
Has the ability to work in harmony with coworkers	5	19	6.15
Understands spoken and written instructions correctly	6	18	4.22
Exhibits personal cleanliness	7	18	4.88
Displays an industrious attitude on the job	8	18	5.33
Makes wise use of time	9	18	6.16
Is a cheerful, pleasant individual	10	18	6.16

The most important characteristic was being "honest in word and deed". The importance of time management is revealed by the fact thattwo of the ten statements dealing with time; "Reports for work regularly and on time, makes wise use of time". The importance of listening, writing and speaking is revealed by the following statements being in the top ten characteristics; "Can listen and follow instructions correctly, and understands spoken and written instructions correctly". The ability to be cheerful, pleasant,clean and work in harmony with coworkers were also included in the ten most important characteristics.

The educational background was considered to be an important personal characteristic. The assumption is that educational experiences may influence an individual's behavior which is reflective of personal characteristics. The data in Table 4 reveals that agribusinesses in Montana prefer employees to have completed two years of an agriculture college program. There is little difference in the preference for two years of post secondary vocational training and two years of general college preparation. The data also shows that no preference is given to those individuals with above average grades in high school. However, individuals who have below average grade are not preferred.

TABLE 4. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND PREFERENCE AS REPORTED BY MONTANA AGRIBUSINESS N=77

Education	Frequency	Percent
Has completed two years of an agriculture college program.	22	28.9
Has completed two years of post secondary vocational education.	13	15.7
Has completed two years of a general college program.	12	17.1
Has completed high school with above average grades.	11	14.4
Has not completed high school.	3	3.9
Other educational background.	3	3.9
Has completed high school with below average grades.	1	1.6

While attending high school, individuals can place emphasis on specific courses. The data in Table 5 disclose the preferences of Montana Agribusinesses with regards to educational preparation. Thirty-two percent of the agribusinesses preferred an individual whose high school education had an emphasis in college preparation and vocational agriculture. There were twice as many employers selecting this education background than any of the other types of educational backgrounds. Sixteen percent (16.2) of the agribusinesses gave preference to a high school diploma with no special emphasis, while 14.8 percent preferred an emphasis on college preparation and 13.5 percent preferred an emphasis on vocational agriculture.

TABLE 5. HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND PREFERENCE AS REPORTED BY MONTANA AGRIBUSINESS N = 77

Education	Frequency	Percent
A high school diploma with no special emphasis.	12	16.2
A high school diploma with an emphasis on college preparation.	11	14.8
A high school diploma with an emphasis in vocational education.	7	9.4
A high school diploma with an emphasis in vocational agriculture.	10	13.5
A high school diploma with an emphasis in college preparation and vocational education.	9	12.1
A high school diploma with an emphasis in college preparation and vocational agriculture.	24	32.4
Other educational preference.	1	1.3

High school activities play an important part in developing personal characteristics. The population was asked to indicate if they preferred perspective employees to have been involved in specific high school activities. The information in Table 6 shows that 24.2 percent like to see that employees were involved in athletics and 15.7 preferred that students be involved "in school clubs such as Key Club". Participation in FFA was also important with 45.7 percent (20.0 + 15.7 + 10.0) preferring some type of FFA involvement. The largest FFA preference is to have been a chapter officer and involved in judging contests. Some agribusinesses (7.1%) prefer that students not be involved in any school organization.

TABLE 6. HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES PREFERENCE AS REPORTED BY MONTANA AGRIBUSINESS N = 77

Activity	Frequency	Percent
Student involved in athletics	17	24.2
Student involved in FFA as an officer and member of judging team	14	20.0
Student a four year member of the Future Farmers of America (FFA)	11	15.7
Student involved in school clubs such as Key Club	11	15.7
Student involved in local and district FFA judging contests in addition to being a member	7	10.0
Student not involved in any school organizations	5	7.1
Other preference	5	7.1

The data in Table 7 reveals that 74.6 percent of the Agribusinesses prefer perspective employees to have a farm or ranch background. Little preference difference is shown between rural, non-farm background and urban background.

TABLE 7. RESIDENTIAL BACKGROUND PREFERENCE AS REPORTED BY MONTANA AGRIBUSINESS N = 77

Resident	Frequency	Percent
Farm or Ranch Background	56	74.6
Rural, non-farm background	8	10.6
Urban background	6	8.0
Other	5	6.6

A major objective of secondary vocational agriculture is to prepare youth for entry level employment in agriculture. Consequently, agribusinesses were asked if they were familiar with a local vocational agriculture program, and to indicate how proficient the program was in preparing high school students for employment. This data is reported in Table 8. Sixty-one percent (47) of the respondents were familiar with a vocational agriculture program. Of the 47 respondents 15 (32.6%) felt the program was somewhat proficient and seven (15.2%) perceived the program to be not proficient. Four individuals felt the program was very proficient.

TABLE 8. LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY OF SECONDARY VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS IN TRAINING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR ENTRY LEVEL EMPLOYMENT AS REPORTED BY MONTANA AGRIBUSINESS N = 47

Level	Frequency	Percent
Very proficient	4	8.7
Proficient	15	32.6
Somewhat Proficient	20	43.3
Not proficient	7	15.2

The data in Table 9 discloses that secondary vocational agriculture programs and the FFA areeffective in developing desirable personal characteristics. Sixty (60.8%) percent of the agribusiness respondents (N=47) observed that vocational agriculture and FFA were effective in developing desirable personal characteristics. Fifteen percent (15.2%) marked the program as being very effective while 24 percent (24%) perceived

the program as being somewhat effective. No one perceived the vocational agriculture program and FFA as not being effective in developing personal characteristics.

TABLE 9. EFFECTIVENESS OF SECONDARY VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS AND FFA IN DEVELOPING DESIRABLE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AS REPORTED BY MONTANA AGRIBUSINESS N = 47

Effectiveness	Frequency	Percent
Very effective	7	15.2
Effective	28	60.8
Somewhat Effective	11	24.0
Not effective	0	0.0

While the law clearly states that persons can not be discriminated against because of martial status, 31.2 percent (31.2%) of the respondents would give preference to hiring a married employee. Three percent (3%) preferred single people and 63.6 reported no preference. The questionnaire contained space for specific comments by the respondents. While insite into the problem was gained by studying these comments, the amount of data was insufficient to formulate into a table. These comments can be found in Appendix B.

Conclusions

Based on an analysis of the data presented previously, the following conclusions were formulated.

1. The personal characteristics most desired by Montana agribusinesses are:
   a. Honesty in word and deed.

b. Willingness to fulfill obligations and promises.

c. Listen, speak and write effectively.

d. Ability to follow orders.

e. Report to work on time and then use time effectively.

f. Friendliness and cleanliness of perspective employee.

2. Perspective employees with a farm or ranch background are preferred in Montana agribusiness.

3. The chance of obtaining employment in Montana agribusiness is greatly increased if they have two years of post secondary education. The preference is to have training in agriculture. However, vocational training or general college education will improve chances of employment. Slightly more than 50 percent of Montana agribusinesses prefer this type of education.

4. About twenty-five percent of Montana agribusinesses prefer a high school diploma. The preference by this group is that the individual take vocational agriculture and college preparation courses while in high school. A person could choose either college preparation courses or vocational agriculture courses and not effect their ability to gain employment in Montana.

5. Montana Agribusinesses give preference to individuals who have been involved in school activities. Athletics and the FFA with all of its activities are effective in

developing those personal characteristics desired by employers in Montana.

6. Agribusinesses in Montana are not always aware of what the local vocational agriculture program is trying to do. Those who are familiar with programs feel the program is proficient at preparing individuals for entry level employment.

Recommendations

Considering the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were formed.

1. In view of the fact that about 40 percent (40%) of Montana's agribusinesses are not aware of the vocational agriculture program in Montana, local vocational agriculture teachers should increase their public relations activities.
2. With fewer and fewer students coming from farm and ranches in Montana, an effort should be made to increase the number of students being employed on farms and ranches as part of their supervised occupational experience.
3. Students enrolled in vocational agriculture should be made aware of the preference they may receive by being involved in FFA and athletics.
4. Schools should give consideration to scheduling of courses so that students can take college preparation and vocational agriculture without having to make a choice between the two.

5. Montana's vocational agriculture programs and FFA chapters should continue to strive to prepare students for entry level employment. There is room for improvement, and ways to improve should be identified and incorporated into the local program.
6. Montana Vocational Agriculture Program should emphasize oral and written communication skills.

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INSTRUCTIONS: The agribusiness field offers many employment opportunities. The researchers would like to determine those personal characteristics needed by employees in the following areas. Please read the definitions for the different types of agribusinesses and check (√) the one definition which best describes your business.

____ 1. Ag Supplies/Services: those businesses which provide supplies to farmers and ranchers and provides service needed to utilize these supplies. (e.g., hardware store, feed store, fertilizer plant).

____ 2. Ag Mechanics: businesses which sell and service agricultural power units, machinery and related equipment. (e.g., farm implement dealer, agricultural mechanic shop).

____ 3. Ag Products: businesses which assemble, sort, test, grade, store and market farm and ranch products. (e.g., elevator, feed mill, dairy processing plant).

____ 4. Ornamental Horticulture: businesses which produce, distribute and utilize ornamental crops principally for ornamental or aesthetic purposes. (e.g., nursery, landscaping, lawn and turf management).

____ 5. Ag Resources: businesses concerned with the principles and practices necessary to conserve and improve our natural resources. (e.g., ASCS, SCS, FHA, Banks).

____ 6. Ag Production: businesses involved in the production, processing, management, marketing, and utilization of food or feed products. (e.g., feedlot, hatchery).

____ 7. Other: (Please Specify)_____

PART I

Below are a list of 47 personal characteristics which have been identified as possibly being important for a person seeking employment. Consider that you are in the process of hiring an individual for employment in your place of business. On the right hand side of the page, please circle the number corresponding to the descriptor which best describes your perception of the value of that characteristic for employment in your organization. In the spaces on the left side, please select and rank the ten most important personal characteristics for employment in your type of business. Place a 1 by the characteristic which is of greatest importance, 2 by the characteristic which is second in importance and so on until you have identified the ten most important characteristics.

		Not Applicable	Nice to Have	Desired	Strongly Desired	Essential
		:	:	:	:	:
Example:		:	:	:	:	:
10 A.	Has an appropriate hair style	5	4	(3)	2	1
____ 1.	Exhibits personal neatness.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 2.	Exhibits personal cleanliness.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 3.	Wears clothing appropriate for the job.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 4.	Has good posture.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 5.	Exhibits emotional stability.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 6.	Reports for work regularly and on time.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 7.	Understands spoken and written orders.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 8.	Speaks clearly and effectively.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 9.	Writes clearly and effectively.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 10.	Initiates undertakings, takes charge when need be.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 11.	Fulfills promises and obligations.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 12.	Is honest in word and deed.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 13.	Can listen and follow instructions correctly.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 14.	Can read and follow written instructions correctly.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 15.	Retains and recalls ideas.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 16.	Makes wise use of time.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 17.	Is happy in his/her work.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 18.	Shows intellectual curiosity.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 19.	Displays an industrious attitude on the job.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 20.	Displays an appropriate attitude toward company.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 21.	Solves arithmatic and numerical problems correctly.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 22.	Selects a course of action for solving a problem while on the job.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 23.	Observes regular ethical and moral codes.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 24.	Admits error when shown to be wrong.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 25.	Observes and differentiates details while on the job.	5	4	3	2	1
____ 26.	Attends to details amid distractions.	5	4	3	2	1

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		Not Applicable - - - - - - - - - - - :				
		Nice to Have - - - - - - - - - :	:			
		Desired - - - - - - - - - - - :	:	:		
		Strongly Desired - - - - - :	:	:	:	
		Essential - - - - - - - :	:	:	:	:
		:	:	:	:	:
		5	4	3	2	1
____27.	Performs a complex set of activities	5	4	3	2	1
____28.	Adjusts to repetitive activities.	5	4	3	2	1
____29.	Can work in hot, cold, noisy work places.	5	4	3	2	1
____30.	Can work safely among potentially hazardous situations.	5	4	3	2	1
____31.	Completes work in an orderly manner.	5	4	3	2	1
____32.	Deals with people in a tense situation.	5	4	3	2	1
____33.	Is a cheerful, pleasant individual.	5	4	3	2	1
____34.	Greets people in a friendly manner.	5	4	3	2	1
____35.	Works alone or with minimum supervision.	5	4	3	2	1
____36.	Stays with a task until completed.	5	4	3	2	1
____37.	Arouses enthusiasm in fellow workers.	5	4	3	2	1
____38.	Exhibits resourcefulness.	5	4	3	2	1
____39.	Desires to be a leader while on the job.	5	4	3	2	1
____40.	Concerned with personal and on-the-job development.	5	4	3	2	1
____41.	Adjusts to interruptions and change.	5	4	3	2	1
____42.	Usually places concerns of the business above his/her personal considerations.					
____43.	Ability to adapt to a variety of personalities and behaviors.	5	4	3	2	1
____44.	Admits to a lack of knowledge.	5	4	3	2	1
____45.	Respects the opinion of others even though he/she disagrees.	5	4	3	2	1
____46.	Exhibits self confidence.	5	4	3	2	1
____47.	Has the ability to work in harmony with coworkers.	5	4	3	2	1

PLEASE REMEMBER TO RANK THE TEN MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS

PART II

Assume you need to hire a beginning semi-skilled employee in your business. You have reduced the field of applicants down to two individuals who both have identical personal characteristics and are 20 years old. Consequently you must look for additional information on which to make your decision. Listed below are a series of experiences that an individual may have developed during their life. Please indicate which of these experiences you would give preference to in making a decision on which of the above persons you would hire. Check only one response. If you would like to comment on your response, do so in the space provided.

1. Educational background preference:
   - ____ has not completed high school
   - ____ has completed high school with above average grades
   - ____ has completed high school with average grades
   - ____ has completed high school with below average grades
   - ____ has completed two years of post-secondary vocational education
   - ____ has completed two years of a general college program
   - ____ has completed two years of an agriculture college program
   - ____ other educational background (please specify) _____
   - ____ Comment:

2. Residential background preference:
   - ____ farm or ranch background
   - ____ rural, non-farm background
   - ____ urban background
   - ____ other preference (please specify) _____
   - ____ Comment:

3. High school educational background:
   - ____ a high school diploma with no special emphasis
   - ____ a high school diploma with an emphasis on college p[illegible]ration
   - ____ a high school diploma with an emphasis on vocationa[illegible]ation
   - ____ a high school diploma with an emphasis on vocationa[illegible]:ulture
   - ____ a high school diploma with an emphasis on college pre[illegible]ion and vocational education
   - ____ a high school diploma with an emphasis on college preparation and vocational agriculture
   - ____ other educational preference (please specify) _____
   - ____ Comment:

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4. High school activities preference:

_____ student not involved in any school organizations
_____ student involved in athletics
_____ student a four year member of the Future Farmers of America (FFA)
_____ student involved in local and district FFA judging contests in addition to being a member
_____ student involved in FFA as an officer and member of judging team
_____ student involved in school clubs such as Key Club
_____ other preference (please specify) _____
_____ Comments:

5. Marital Status:

_____ Married _____ Single _____ No preference

PART III

Personal characteristics can be developed in an educational program as can specific worker competencies. Because vocational agriculture is designed to prepare individuals for entry level employment, the researchers are interested in learning about your perceptions of the ability of secondary vocational agriculture programs to prepare high school students for employment in local businesses. If you are familiar with the present vocational program, please answer the following three questions by checking the appropriate response. If you are not familiar with the present vocational agriculture program, you have completed the questionnaire.

1. To what extent are you familiar with the present vocational agriculture program in your area?

_____ Very familiar _____ Somewhat familiar
_____ Familiar

2. To what level of proficiency do you feel a secondary vocational agriculture program can train high school students for entry level employment in businesses like yours.

_____ Very proficient _____ Somewhat proficient
_____ Proficient _____ Not proficient

3. How effective are the secondary vocational agriculture programs and the FFA in developing desirable personal characteristics of high school students.

_____ Very effective _____ Somewhat effective
_____ Effective _____ Not effective

Additional Comments:

Please fold the questionnaire with the address on the outside and staple at the bottom.

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APPENDIX B

Ag Supplies/Services

1. College is not absolutely necessary in this work, but if a person has the willingness to learn, he can be a success in whatever we expect from him.
   Nothing beats an educated person.
   College grads think they know more than their boss does.
   Background - city or farm raised.

2. To know how to use our products is an asset and would be able to communicate with customers on these products.
   Interested in hardware business.
   Qualifications more important than background.

3. FFA and athletics. I want the person competitive.
   This person could show leadership, plus have the ability to think for himself with a reason.
   Involvement period - to indicate sociability and aggressiveness.
   I would prefer student with a background in several clubs and activities.

Additional Comments:

I have hired a goodly number of people in my day. First, I want to know the person really wants to work, then I want to know they are capable of being trained (educational records, prove that), then I look for personality--pleasant, interested, sincere. Beyond that their work and attitudes merely add or subtract from their chances of advancement. If I look for one main trait, it is honesty.

I look at, if the person is a self motivator, then I will be responsible to give him the challenge to fulfill his abilities. Also, somewhere through the schooling system these people come out with the wrong attitude on wages. I feel their worth has to be earned by their performance which too often isn't their attitude in the beginning.

I have worked 4 young men who came through our local school system and were in FFA. One was excellent, one was very good, and two were worthless. The school system and especially the parents are not demanding that these kids study and learn something. One of the kids I employed could not figure out how many 50# bags were in a 1200# load! Of the two worthless ones, one couldn't read very well and the other one was just plain lazy, so education didn't do him much good. Both these two are basically unemployable. They require too much supervision. We are turning out too many just like them I'm afraid.

Ag Mechanics

1. If person had taken welding, mechanics course.
2. Depends on subject person had taken.
3. Involved in extra activities.

Ag Products

1. Less education = more loyalty to an employer, or at least more willingness to accept his training.

2. City dwellers do not take for granted the blessings of country work.

3. Probably would have necessary mechanical metal working skills to be helpful if he/she had this background.

4. More likely to have less clearly defined vocational goals - thus more trainable, more flexible, less likely to jump ship.

Additional Comments:

Regarding morality and respect for other individuals, such programs have been much like computer programs: garbage in, garbage out.

I don't believe the VoAg Program provides personal character development. This development has already taken place in the home before a person gets involved in the VoAg Program.

Ornamental Horticulture

Additional Comments:

Look for eagerness to learn different aspects of job. Ability to retain what is taught. But we have found employer must make a fertile atmosphere where employee feels he can approach employer with problem and not be belittled.

Ag Resources

1. Of those choices allowed, I would prefer 2 years agriculture college. However, 4 years with a degree would be more preferable.

2. This is a farming area, so more applicable.

3. Active in any extracurricular activities or work outside of school.

Ag Production

1. Training or job experience related to job position. In the processing of poultry on a small scale such as ours, education is not really a factor.

2. Usually trained to work.

3. That would depend on the job.

Additional Comments:

The most important thing is to be able to experience the job or task. You can tell and show them, but most people need to do the task to perceive it.